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ABSTRACT

This study examined existing relationships between the leader behaviors of elementary school principals and the organizational processes of their schools. T-tests were used to determine significant relationships between leader behaviors (measured by the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire-Form XII) and contrasting school typologies (described by the Profile of a School instrument.) The sample was composed of 23 schools and 412 teachers. Four leader behaviors -- tolerance of freedom, consideration, integration, and tolerance of uncertainty -- were found to be significantly higher for schools having participative group organizational processes than for schools described as having more authoritative processes. Implications for organization development and research are discussed. (Author)

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A STUDY OF PRINCIPAL LEADER BEHAVIOR AND CONTRASTING ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS[1]

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INTRODUCTION

Modern organization theory (Likert, 1967) and research from business organizations (Marrow, Bowers, and Seashore, 1967) support the proposition that there is a significant relationship between leader behavior and organizational productivity. Likert's (1961) research indicates that in organizations which are highly productive, leader behavior is a causal variable for both high productivity and patterns of organizational behavior which are consistent with the construct of an "ideal" organization derived from modern organization theory (Argyris, 1964; McGregor, 1960). The purpose of this study was to determine the relationships between organizational processes of schools and the leader behaviors of elementary principals. Specifically, the question asked was, What are particular principal leader behaviors which are characteristic of different organizational environments, i.e., those with contrasting organizational processes? It was hypothesized that schools which approach the participative-group organizational typology (Likert, 1961) would be administered by principals whose leader behaviors were more interpersonal than the behaviors of principals of schools which approach the authoritative organizational typology.

THEORY AND RATIONALE

Theory and research emanating from the social and behavioral sciences, especially social psychology and the emerging area of organizational behavior (Pugh, 1969) supports the position that when ideographic needs (personal) and nomothetic goals (organizational)

are met concomitantly via particular organizational behaviors, employer satisfaction, organizational health, and productivity increase (Bakke, 1953).

A specific organizational model described by Likert conceptually integrates current theory and research in behavioral terms. This model is especially relevant, since it also specifies a relationship of leadership to organizational behaviors. Likert (1961) describes the System 4, participative-group, organization as consisting of seven basic processes. These processes are: (Likert, 1961)

1. Leadership processes

   Leadership processes are typified by behaviors in which superordinates exhibit to subordinates complete confidence and trust in all matters. This trust is demonstrated through supportive behavior in all situations. In Likert's words: "The leadership and other processes of the organization must be such as to ensure a maximum probability that in all interactions and in all relationships within the organization, each member, in the light of his background, values, desires, and expectations will view the experience as supportive and one which builds and maintains his sense of personal worth and importance." (p. 103) This behavior is exhibited through open communications and discussion of ideas and opinions between superordinate and subordinate.

2. Motivational forces

   Motivational forces provide intrinsic rewards based on group participation and involvement in setting goals, improving methods, and appraising progress. Motivational forces tend to reinforce each other at both the feeling and the task levels. Favorable attitudes tend to stimulate behavior consonant with the carrying out of the goals of the organization. Personnel feel responsible for attaining goals and co-operate willingly in a setting of mutual confidence and trust. Further, high satisfaction is derived from membership in the organization.

3. Communication processes

Communication processes are open and used vertically and horizontally at all levels. Communications are initiated at all levels and provide information on problem-solving. Communication is generally accepted, and little attempt is made to distort messages. Through this open communication system superordinates are able to accurately appraise and understand the problems of subordinates.

4. Interaction-influence processes

Continuous friendly interaction, characterized by a high degree of confidence and trust, is exhibited extensively throughout the organization. Subordinates perceive themselves as having influence over the goals, methods and activities of the organization. Superordinates have a substantial influence, which is exerted in a non-autocratic fashion. As a consequence of this reciprocal influence, all members of the organization may show positive socioemotional behaviors. Subsystems of the organization are able to influence each other effectively.

5. Decision-making processes

Decision-making is shared widely throughout the organization. Ideas from different work groups are shared so that the information will be available when decisions are made. Decision-makers use expertise where it exists in the organization and are well aware of consequences and the potentiality for unanticipated consequences. Where possible decisions are made at the same level at which they will be carried out. The decision-making process contributes to high motivation, co-operation, and esprit among groups.

6. Goal-setting processes

High-level goals are sought by all groups and are established by means of group participation. Expressed and unexpressed feelings promote full acceptance of group goals.

7. Control processes

The organizational control process is concerned with the locus of evaluation - whether it is internal or external. The informal organization and the formal organization act in concert, producing an environment in which evaluation stems from agreed upon goals.

Research supports the viewpoint that where leadership facilitates meaningful interpersonal interaction, productivity and job satisfaction increase. In studies of railroad workers and office personnel, leadership style was related to productivity (Katz & Morse, 1950; Katz, et al., 1951). Similarly, the Hersberg Study (Hersberg, Mauser, & Snyderman, 1957) supports the view that job satisfaction is related to interpersonal climate. In research with school organizations there were significant correlations between leader behavior of principals and organizational processes (Feitler, 1970).

Despite the lack of generally agreed upon measures of educational productivity, vis a vis the private sector, it is assumed that school organizations are more like those from business and industry than they are different. The basic need to fulfill basic adult developmental needs (Argyris, 1957) is apparent in educational organizations and manifests itself overtly through negotiations, as an example.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND METHODOLOGY

Although existing research and theory supports the relationship between leadership and organizational productivity, there is little empirical evidence to corroborate possible hypothesized relations for specific leader behaviors and measures of organizational processes in schools. Particularly lacking is an understanding of the effects of leadership on organizational characteristics or behaviors. This study examined the question: What are differences in leader behavior which exist for schools which in the direction of

the participative group (System 4) organization in contrast to organizations which are described as more authoritative (System 1)?

Organizational processes were measured by the Profile of a School-Form "T", a thirty item questionnaire for teachers, developed from a fifty-one item, parallel form used in business (Likert, 1961) and a thirty-two item school form developed by Jane and Rensis Likert. Factor analysis of the Profile instrument indicated that it measures and behaviorally describes a central construct, defined as the organizational environment (Feitler, 1970). This environment is a measure of the interpersonal and group processes present in the school organization. Five discrete factors were identified:

> Superior-Oriented Dimension - Factor 1 reflects the nature of the interpersonal environment derived from the behavior of the principal. Factor 1 was called "Superior Oriented" processes or the Superior-Orientation dimension, since it includes elements of both leadership and supervisory processes.
>
> Task-Cooperation Dimension - Factor 2 describes the quality and amount of cooperation operating in the school, particularly as it relates to tasks and goals. This cluster or factor was called "Task-Cooperation" processes or the Task-Cooperation dimension.
>
> Communication-Decision-Making Dimension - Factor 3 describes the communication processes and the quality of decision-making in the school. This factor was named the "Communication-Decision-Making" processes or the Communication-Decision-Making dimension.
>
> Socio-Emotional Dimension - Factor 4 focuses on the friendliness and support present in the school. This cluster was called the "Socio-Emotional" processes or the Socio-Emotional dimension.
>
> Involvement-Motivation Dimension - Factor 5 concentrates on the effect of involvement in setting goals and decision-making on the motivation of teachers. This cluster was called "Involvement-Motivational" processes or the Involvement-Motivation dimension.

These five dimensions are described on a management continuum from System 1, authoritative to System 4, participative group. Together, they describe the organizational environment. The Profile has been used extensively in educational settings: for doctoral research, to measure organizational change (Feitler and Blumberg, 1971), and as a diagnostic tool.

The Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire--Form XII (LBDQ-XII) served as the dependent variable. According to Stogdill, its developer, the LBDQ-XII, "can be used to describe the behavior of...leaders in any type of group or organization, provided the followers have had an opportunity to observe the leader in action as a leader of the group (or organization)" (Stogdill, 1963, p.1). The questionnaire measures teacher perceptions of leader behavior and is judged to be reliable (Stogdill, 1963; Punch, 1967; and Brown, 1967). These behaviors are defined (Stogdill, 1963, p.3):

1. Representation -- Representative leaders speak and act as spokesmen for subordinates.

2. Demand Reconciliation -- Demand reconciliating leaders bring conflicting demands into accord and reduce disorder.

3. Tolerance of Uncertainty -- Leaders who are tolerant of uncertainty are able to accept indefinite situations and postpone action without anxiety or upset.

4. Persuasiveness-- Persuasive leaders are convincing, use arguments effectively, and exhibit strong convictions.

5. Initiation of Structure -- Leaders who initiate structure clearly define their own roles and inform subordinates of what is expected of them.

6. Tolerance of Freedom -- Leaders who are tolerant of freedom allow subordinates to exercise initiative, make decisions, and take action.

7. Role Assumption -- Role-assuming leaders actively exercise the leadership role rather than surrendering leadership to others.

8. Consideration -- Considerate leaders regard the comfort, well-being, status, and contributions of their subordinates.

9. Production Emphasis -- Production emphasing leaders apply pressure for increased output.

10. Predictive Accuracy -- Leaders who are accurate in prediction have the ability to concretely anticipate outcomes.

11. Integration -- Integrative leaders maintain closely knit organizations and resolve inter-member conflicts.

12. Superior Orientation -- Superior-oriented leaders maintain cordial relations with superiors, have influence with superiors, and strive for higher status.

The Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire, Form XII, is in its fourth revision and has been used with military, governmental, business, labor, university, community, and school leaders. Although it does not measure all ramifications of leader behavior, it does cover a wider range of behavior than its predecessor, the LBDQ II. The so-called LBDQ II is well known, with numerous published studies attesting to its usefulness.

Using these instruments the following question was examined:

> How do perceptions of leader behavior for principals of schools in the direction of the participative-group organization ("high" schools) differ from the behavior of principals of schools in the direction of authoritative organizations ("low" schools)?

More precisely, it is expected that "high" schools are characterized as having principals whose leadership is higher on LBDQ-XII interpersonal subscale scores than the leader behaviors of principals for "low" schools. Further, it is expected that there

are no differences on scales which are not interpersonal in nature. Content analysis was used to group those behaviors classified as interpersonal--those which required extensive interpersonal interaction between principal and teachers.

H_1: "High" schools have principals with higher LBDQ-XII scores than for "low" schools.

H_2: Interpersonal leader behaviors are higher for "high" schools than for "low" schools on the following dimensions:

1. Representation
2. Persuasion
3. Initiation of Structure
4. Tolerance of Freedom
5. Role Assumption
6. Consideration
7. Production Emphasis
8. Integration
9. Superior Orientation

H_3: There are no statistically significant differences between "high" and "low" schools on the following non-interpersonal LBDQ-XII subscales:

1. Demand Reconciliation
2. Tolerance of Uncertainty
3. Predictive Accuracy

t-tests were used to test each of the twelve LBDQ-XII dimensions for schools falling in the upper and lower quartiles of the authoritative-participative-group continuum. The sample consisted of twenty-three elementary school principals and their faculties from an urban school district. Four hundred twelve teachers participated in the study.

RESULTS

Table 1 indicates four of the twelve LBDQ-XII dimensions were significantly higher for schools which approached the participative-group end of the management continuum than for schools which approached the authoritative end of the continuum. Those were: tolerance of freedom, consideration, integration, and tolerance of uncertainty. The remaining eight dimensions were not significantly higher for the participative-group quartile schools. Since six hypotheses concerned with the interpersonal quality of leader behavior were not supported, a content analysis of the four significant and eight non-significant relationships was made. Two important observations were apparent.

The four leader behaviors which were significantly higher for the participative-group schools specifically described a high degree of regard for teachers as persons, with adult psychological needs. These were in contrast to behaviors which related to operating the school or getting a task done; i.e., leader behaviors which support the integrity and personal needs of teachers are those that relate to organizational processes of schools.

These four leader behaviors were those found by Brown (1967) and Punch (1967) to be person-oriented, rather than system-oriented. Correlation data (Feitler, 1971) further support these four behaviors as being significantly related to the superior-oriented, socio-emotional, and involvement-motivational processes of the Profile, those three dimensions identified with organizational maintenance, rather than task-achievement.

TABLE 1

HIGH AND LOW SCHOOL LBDQ
MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS,
t VALUES AND ESTIMATES OF W^2

	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	t VALUE	LEVEL OF * SIGNIFICANCE	ESTIMATE OF W^2
Total LBDQ Score					
High	28.94	1.21	3.01	.025	.402
Low	27.36	.42			
Representation Score					
High	19.28	1.91	-.15	N.S.	----
Low	19.41	.93			
Persuasion Score					
High	36.37	2.84	.88	N.S.	----
Low	35.24	1.37			
Initiation of Structure Score					
High	35.97	2.02	.56	N.S.	----
Low	35.44	1.13			
Tolerance of Freedom Score					
High	38.42	1.78	3.85	.005	.535
Low	34.79	1.49			
Role Assumption Score					
High	24.90	3.02	-.09	N.S.	----
Low	25.02	1.01			
Consideration Score					
High	36.51	1.20	7.40	.001	.818
Low	32.45	.59			
Production Emphasis Score					
High	32.73	3.45	-.05	N.S.	----
Low	32.81	2.27			
Integration Score					
High	20.37	1.80	4.03	.005	.559
Low	17.04	.92			
Superior Orientation Score					
High	32.43	2.09	.52	N.S.	----
Low	31.74	2.44			
Demand Reconciliation Score					
High	16.74	.69	2.52	N.S.	----
Low	15.86	.51			
Tolerance of Uncertainty Score					
High	36.15	.60	6.09	.001	.750
Low	31.97	1.57			
Predictive Accuracy Score					
High	17.39	1.02	1.61	N.S.	----
Low	16.62	.60			

* The Level of Significance has been corrected by taking a separate variance estimate, which reduces the degrees of freedom in proportion to the difference in variance.

Hypothesis 1 was also supported. The total LBDQ mean was significantly higher for schools whose organizational Profile was toward System 4 than for the quartile of schools in the direction of System 1.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study suggest that there is a significant relationship between organizational processes, measured by the Profile of a school, and leader behaviors measured by the LBDQ-XII. What is of greater interest is the implication that the positive quality or regard for teachers exhibited by the principal is a determining factor in the organizational environment of the school.

Present role expectations of building principals which include evaluation and task related duties may interfere with or prevent the quality of interaction which is consistent with the System 4 model. Further research with a larger sample and tighter research design should help to examine this proposition. If System 4 organizations are desirable in education and there is a causal relationship between the quality of interpersonal behavior and organizational behaviors this gives substantial support to giving a heavy loading of interpersonal skill training to prospective and current administrators.

One design to test the preceding proposition is being tested at present by the author. Twelve schools are completing the second year of an intensive organizational development program involving a team of teachers and administrators. These persons have received

training in small group, leadership, and interpersonal skills. After one year eleven of the twelve schools showed substantial movement in the direction of a System 4 organization. Taken as a group the mean difference in total Profile mean scores was significantly higher at $\alpha < .001$, suggesting that interpersonal skill training can shift a school's organizational environment.

These results support and are consistent with modern organization theory and social systems theory, which suggest that the organizational leader sets the climate for meeting idiographic (personal) needs and that these needs must be accommodated in an effective organization.

SUMMARY

In addition to supporting the social-psychological model expounded by Likert and testifying to its relevance in educational organizations, the study should lead to further research and organizational development activities. Specifically, research is needed to verify the causal relationship, implied by Likert and supported in the private sector, between the participative-group organizational typology and a highly productive school organization. The Profile of a School instrument and these findings have potential value for organizational development and research. Leadership training for school administrators focusing on the four significant behaviors may provide a means to shift the school organizational processes in the direction of a participative-group organization. Further research in this area is needed which may have significance for organizational development design and administrative training programs.

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